

THE POWER OF SELF- RESTRAINT

by

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

Website: swami-krishnananda.org

(Spoken on Guru Purnima in 1992)

On this holy Sri Vyasa Purnima, known as Sri Guru Purnima, which symbolises before us a fullness of every kind, we invoke that mighty presence of Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, who shines in this world as the radiant sun in the sky. Even as the light of the sun is pervading all space and yet we can behold the glory of the orb of the sun at a particular spot in the sky, so also while the majesty and power and aura and blessing of this great master pervades the whole earth, it is said in the scriptures that he is principally stationed in sacred Badrika Ashrama, representing the power and the light of utter self-restraint - a power that is God's, as whose complete representation has incarnated himself on this earth to establish the *dharma*, or the law self-control, as establishment in Truth. The power of this great master is the power of self-restraint. His presence is not in a location somewhere, on some particular spot exclusively, but is a mighty influence exerted everywhere, whereby he identifies his presence with all existence - due to which it is that the power of existence itself reveals itself in him. The greater is the capacity to restrain oneself, the greater also is the power one feels within one's own self.

We have heard that there is a variety of powers in this world. There is monetary power, muscular power, political power, social power, intellectual power, and a variety of these things – but these are all external to the wielder of the power. In some cases they are only foisted upon a person. But the powers of great masters like Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa are not adjectives to their existence. They are not their qualifications. They are their very presence.

Self-restraint is itself a power because of the fact that all the avenues of depletion of energy get transmuted into the very existence of the saint or the seeker or the sage, and the channels through which energy moves out in the direction of things and objects in the world get melted down, as it were, in the menstruum of self-control. Things become the very subject, the very meditator, the contemplator, the beholder, the visualiser of themselves.

Weakness is the effect of the transferring of our being to something other than what we are. The more you think of things other than what you are, the weaker are also your sense organs, your mind, your intellect. People have a wrong notion that they become stronger by the possession of a larger quantum of things in the world. Rather, the greater is your possession, the weaker is your personality. The more is your property, the weaker you are. It is a weak person that requires property. The weaker you are, the greater is your desire to own things in the world. The stronger you are, the lesser is the need of any kind in this world.

Such great masters like Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa are themselves all things. You may be wondering how it is possible for anyone to be all things. That our Atman is all-pervading is something known to you all, a message that has been dinned into our ears by Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj especially, and all the saints and sages in the country. If the Atman is everywhere, and it is within you, and you yourself are the Atman, the pervadingness, the omnipresence of the Atman has certainly to do something with you. The omnipresence of the Atman is actually the

omnipresence of yourself, basically. Because of this fact of the omnipresence of the Atman, which is the real being of everyone, contemplation on the Atman draws into oneself the power of omnipresence.

You must have leisure to think what omnipresence means. Suddenly you cannot imagine what it actually connotes. It is the presence of one thing everywhere. Such a thing is not imaginable. It is the interference of space in our consciousness that makes us feel that we are in one place. If the curtain of space is lifted, we will find ourselves everywhere. It is interference of the time process that makes us feel that we are living only at some time. If the curtain of time is lifted, we will find ourselves at all times. So, the lifting of the spatial curtain will make us feel that we are infinite, and the lifting of the curtain of time will make us feel that we are eternal. Therefore, the effort of the art of yoga consisting in the transcending of oneself above the limitations of space and time will bring about a blend of infinity and eternity. The question of desiring for things will not arise anymore.

Desire is a disease; it is a malady; it is an illness; it is not a virtue at all. But contrary is the way in which the lower mind contemplates things. The larger is the area of the operation of desires, the more a person seems to be feeling happy inside. This is total introversion, upside-down thinking, a topsy-turvy way of looking at things, and a headlong rushing into an area of self-destruction.

This message of the blessedness of mankind consisting in utter self-control and contemplation on that majesty of Reality, which is ever present and is seeing us with its multiple eyes - this message is the message of Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa to us, which he has endeavoured to communicate to the entire mankind through the classification of the Vedas in which he was engaged, the writing of the Mahabharata and the Puranas and, above all, by his very presence in this world. Vyasa is not dead and gone. He is one of the Chiranjivis. Nara-Narayana are alive even now. Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa is alive here. In our

presence here, in this very hall, he may be in one form, blessing us due to the invocation of his presence by the invisible presence of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

May our hearts open. May we break our limitations of thinking. May we desire nothing, because we need nothing. May you contemplate these truths deeply in your heart and soul and receive the abundant grace of these divine masters, is my humble prayer on this sacred occasion of Sri Guru Purnima. God bless you.